

University of Groningen

Jan Patocka on being human in a technological culture

Evink, Eddo

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

2014

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Evink, E. (2014). *Jan Patocka on being human in a technological culture*. 84-95.

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.



Drift

wijsgerig
festival

6 april 2013 / OT 301, Amsterdam

Wijgerig festival DRIET 2013

De dingen de baas

Naam publicatie: De dingen de baas. Wijgerig festival DRIET 2013.

Redactie: Geertjan Buijs, Tom Kayzei, Twan Kleboom, Janno Martens, Sigmund Bruno Schilprand

Hoofredactie: Dera Waal

Grafische vormgeving: STUDIO-STUPE

@ 2001 - 2014 Wijgerig festival Driet

ISBN: 978-94-91633-14-0

Behoudens uitzondering door de wet gesteld mag zonder schriftelijke toestemming van het Wijgerig festival Driet niets uit deze uitgave worden vervaelvoudigd en/of openbaar gemaakt door middel van fotokopie, microfilm, opslag in computerbestanden of anderszins, hetgeen ook van toepassing is op geheel of gedeeltelijke bewerking. Deze publicatie is uitgegeven door Wijgerig festival DRIET, welke dankbaar gebruik maakt van de mogelijkheid van Omnia- Amsterdam Uigeverij voor onder andere ISBN-nummers en opname in het archief van de Koninklijke Bibliotheek.

Uigezonderd hiervan zijn de bijdragen 'Obese Man in Motorized Cart at Lowe's', 'Silver-Spring1981' en 'Samantha de Jong, beter bekend als Barbie' (de foto's op pagina 155 van dit eboek) die in deze bundel onder licentie van Creative Commons zijn opgenomen.

'Obese Man in Motorized Cart at Lowe's' is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode>

'SilverSpring1981' is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/legalcode>

'Samantha de Jong, beter bekend als Barbie' is licensed under the Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 license.

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/legalcode>

Voorwoord

Beste lezer,

De publicatie die u voor u heeft is een verslag van Wijgerig Festival DRIFT 2013. Misschien bent u er zelf bij geweest en wilt u nog even rustig teruglezen wat u voor interessante of inspirerende dingen heeft gehoord. Misschien was u er niet bij, maar bent u geïnteresseerd in een bepaalde spreker, ons thema ('dingen'), of een van de vele onderwerpen die er tijdens deze avond ter tafel zijn gekomen. Voor ons, de redactie, is deze publicatie meer dan dat. Het is de eerste publicatie die wij hebben voortgebracht. Wij hebben voor de eerste keer onze hand gewaagd aan het vertalen van een filosofische tekst, het transcriberen en redigeren van lezingen en het daadwerkelijk publiceren van een (e-)boek. Ik zal voor u uiteen proberen te zetten waarom wij het belangrijk achten om een impressie van DRIFT 2013 op papier te krijgen voor u.

Wijgerig Festival DRIFT is een jaarlijkse avond met een filosofisch programma, georganiseerd door studenten wijsbegeerte aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam. We proberen op een toegankelijke manier academische filosofie te presenteren, gericht op een breed publiek. Ook bieden wij op deze avond een podium aan dichters, muzikanten, theatermakers en andere kunstenaars.

In 2007 is DRIFT in het leven geroepen uit onvrede met populairwetenschappelijke filosofie-evenementen waarbij de relatieve oppervlakkigheid vaak in schril contrast staat met de hoge toegangsprijs. Tegelijkertijd wil het festival tegenwicht bieden aan de vaak (voor zowel leek als student) ontoegankelijke wereld van de academische lezingen en symposia. Wij proberen sinds het ontstaan van het festival kwalitatief hoogstaande lezingen en debatten af te wisselen met lezingen van veelbelovende studenten (die wij 'traplezingen' noemen omdat deze van oudsher op de trappen plaatsvonden) en verschillende kunstvormen. Bovendien wordt het festival traditioneel afgesloten met een groot feest. Sinds het begin van festival DRIFT worden op deze avond, dankzij onze focus op zowel hoogstaande filosofie als toegankelijkheid en plezier, de academische wijsgeer en de geïnteresseerde leek bijeen gebracht.

Elk jaar kiest het collectief van organisatoren een thema, waarbij zij zich laten leiden door de recente ontwikkelingen in zowel de maatschappij als de wijsbegeerte. In 2013 was het thema: *De dingen de baas*. Dit thema is ontleend aan het gelijknamige verhaal van Belcampo, waarin de dingen tot leven komen en de wereldmacht overnemen. Met dit thema sloten wij aan bij de opkomst van een nieuwe stroming in de filosofie, waarbij niet langer het subject centraal staat: de 'objectgeoriënteerde filosofie'.

Op DRIFT 2013 gingen twee grote namen uit de objectgeoriënteerde filosofie met elkaar in debat, namelijk Graham Harman en Tristan Garcia. Van het filosofische vuurwerk dat daarmee gepaard ging wordt hier verslag gedaan. Met een uitstekende introductie in het werk van beide filosofen is het voor zowel ingewijden in deze filosofische stroming als niet-ingewijde geïnteresseerden een zeer interessant stuk geworden, dat ik u van harte kan aanraden.

Ook de overige lezingen en debatten die allemaal, ondanks hun zeet uiteenlopende onderwerpen, allemaal iets met het thema 'dingen' te maken hebben, zijn het waard om gelezen te worden. Dit was voor ons, de redactie, de reden om onze tijd en inspanningen te wijden aan de verslaglegging van deze onvergetelijke avond. Het is het bewijs geworden dat academische filosofie ontzettend leuk kan zijn, en omgekeerd dat dagene wat leuk is ook inhoudelijk iets te bieden kan hebben. En dat wilden wij, de organisatoren van Wijgerig Festival DRIFT, nu eindelijk wel eens op papier hebben.

Namens Collectief DRIFT 2013 wens ik u dus vooral veel plezier bij het lezen van dit (e-)boek.

Deva Waal

Inhoudsopgave

Lezingen en debatten

- P. 9 Dan Zahavi (Verraling 'Subjecthood and objecthood'), Benedenzaal, 20.15-21.00
P. 24 Noortje Maures (transcription lecture), Benedenzaal, 21.15-22.00
P. 35 Graham Harman-Tristan García (transcription debate), Benedenzaal 22.15-23.15
P. 62 Iris van der Tuin (lecture), Cinemabar, 21.15-22.00
P. 69 Matthijs Jonker (lezing), Cinemabar 22.15-23.00
P. 84 Eddo Evink (transcription lecture), Cinemabar, 23.15-00.00
P. 96 Sander Sander Kruse (transcriptie lezing), Cinemazaal, 20.00-20.45
P. 109 Natuurkunde-Metafysicadebat (transcriptie debat), Cinemazaal 21.00-22.00
P. 127 Rudi Laermans (transcriptie lezing), Cinemazaal, 23.30-00.15

Traplezingen

- P. 143 Peter Huijzer (traplezing), De Peper, 21.45-22.00
P. 148 Joost Leuven (traplezing), De Peper, 22.30-22.45
P. 152 Daniël de Zeeuw (traplezing), De Peper, 23.15-23.30

Literatuur en gedichten

- P. 159 Thomas van Huut (gedichten), De Peper, 20.15-20.30
P. 161 Emma Curvers (voorpublicatie), De Peper, 21.00-21.15
P. 165 Daniël Vis (gedichten), De Peper, 23.30-23.45

- P. 169 Folia interview

- P. 172 Opiniestuk

- P. 176 Dankwoord

Ian Patočka on being human in a technological culture

*Eddo Evink
(transcription lecture)
CinemaBar, 23:15-00:00*

*Transcription and editing: Tom Koyzel, Simund Schlipzand, Tindard Vernooort
and Tuana Kabeom*

I'll give an introduction into the philosophy of Jan Patočka, who lived from 1907 to 1977. He studied philosophy in Prague and also as an exchange student at the Sorbonne in Paris. After finishing his study in Prague he went to Freiburg to study with Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. He was educated in phenomenology and from the 1960's on he developed his own ideas in phenomenology as an a-subjective phenomenology. Patočka was not able to have a real philosophical career, first of all because of the Second World War and secondly because in communist Czechoslovakia he could not have a position at the university since he did not want to teach communist philosophy. Since it was very hard to get his own philosophy published, he mainly focused on the history of thought up to the 1960's when he started to work out his own phenomenological ideas. In 1968, thanks to the Prague spring, he could finally become a professor in philosophy at the Charles University in Prague, and only for a few years. He was removed from the university in 1971. After that he gave underground seminars and lectures often in his own living room. One of the people who attended those lectures and who was already influenced by him before was Václav Havel, a well-know dissident who later became president of Czechoslovakia. He was highly inspired by Patočka's thought. The only moment in which Patočka became politically active was in January 1977, when he was one of the spokesmen of the manifest *Charter-77*. Out of this grew a large dissident movement in Czechoslovakia, but that was only after Patočka's death in March 1977. At that time all the spokesmen were arrested by the Czechoslovakia secret police. Patočka was severely interrogated and died after suffering heart-failure under police interrogation. We might say that it is quite a sad biography, which also makes clear why he did not become that well known and famous as other phenomenologists of the same generation like Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas. Nevertheless I think he is at least as interesting as his contemporaries. It did not help either that most of the texts that Patočka did get published were written in Czech. Only since the 1980's and 1990's work of Patočka has been translated in French and German, so even now there is only a small but growing group of people that is studying his work.

A subjective Phenomenology

What is Patočka's contribution to phenomenology? As you know phenomenology starts with analyzing how things appear to us. It doesn't make sense to judge about the things, to speak about things, to think about the reality in which we live, without first asking the question 'how does it appear?' How exactly is reality already there when we start to think about it? How is it already there when we start to analyze? We should focus on the way in which things appear and postpone all other judgements. Edmund Husserl has developed this notion as a method in terms of a transcendental reduction: the objects of scientific and philosophical analysis should be reduced to the field of appearance, the 'place' where things originally appear to us. The field of appearance, according to Husserl, is consciousness. Everything appears in consciousness. Patočka also follows his other teacher, Martin Heidegger, who insisted that human being (*Dasein*) is always already *Dasein* in the world and that, in its full existence, it is relating to the world, not only in terms of its consciousness. In discussion with Husserl's texts, Patočka has redeveloped the notion of transcendental reduction, as a reduction to the field of appearance which is not only consciousness, but a field of appearance that is a sort of cooperation between the things that occur to us and constitute themselves in their appearing, together with the world in which they appear and together with other subjects to whom they also appear. The field of appearance is therefore something of its own, it includes not only consciousness, but also an intersubjectivity. In addition, it includes the things in themselves, that also constitute the field of appearing, which means that it also includes the world. So how things appear to us, how the phenomena are constituted, should not be understood in terms of consciousness that constitutes the phenomena, but human beings should be understood instead as subjects participating in the constitution of the world, and of the phenomena. Even more important: the world and the phenomena also constitute us. So the world shapes us more than we shape the world ourselves. In this respect Patočka does not only criticize Husserl, who thought, as I said, that transcendental reduction is a reduction to consciousness, but he also criticizes Heidegger, who describes human *Dasein* as 'Dasein that designs worlds', that creates the worlds in which things appear. Even that, according to Patočka, is thought too much from a subjective point of view. The field of appearance is not subjective. The subject should be understood in relation to the field of appearance. This is what Patočka means with this notion of a-subjective phenomenology. In terms of the Dutch title of this whole festival '*De dingen de baas*': are we in charge or are the things in charge of us? Do we dominate things or do things dominate us? If we consider this question from an a-subjective phenomenological point of view, then the things dominate us more than we dominate the things. This because our relation to them shapes us, instead of that only we shape a world in which thing appears to us.

Three movements of human life

Now the question is: how does the human subject relate to the world, by which it is constituted itself? Being constituted by the world, by the field of appearance, is thought of by Patocka in terms of surrender, dedication. We have to surrender to the world in order to find and understand ourselves. Only then we understand ourselves in the right relation to the world. So how does the human being relate to the world in which he lives? Here Patocka makes a distinction between three movements, three fundamental movements in which we relate to the world. He thinks this in terms of movements because he has a very dynamic idea of existence. Existence is not something stable, solid or fixed; it always is movement. Aristotle's idea of movement is very influential here. So there are three movements of human existence.

[1] The first is the movement of *anchoring* or *rooting*. We are always already embedded within a natural world, within a cultural world. We are first of all at home in the world. A world in which we are accepted. We need air to breathe and there is air to breathe. We need food to stay alive and there is food. And this is given to us from the time when we were a small child. Also, the moment we are born we are accepted within a community, to which we intuitively, instinctively surrender. So this is a passive relation of surrender to the world by which we are accepted. Now this safe world in which we can grow up might also be in danger. It is not necessarily really a safe world. But the danger can only be understood as secondary with regard to the idea that in principle we are accepted. Accepted in a cultural and natural environment. This is the passive movement of surrender.

[2] The second movement is more active. It's a matter of staying alive. This is the dimension of labour and work. Patocka calls it the movement of *self-prolongation* or the movement of *self-interest*. We may relate to the world in such a way that we stay alive. It is a movement of self-interest, of calculation, of conflict. These two movements, the passive movement of surrender and the active movement of self-prolongation, are supposed to take place within a stable world, a fixed world with clear structures. The reason why self-prolongation is also seen as moment of surrender is that in order to survive, we cannot give way to our first desire, but we have to postpone the desires we want to satisfy in an economical way. There is a temporary calculated moment of surrender, but always in service of the self-prolongation, which is central in the second movement. So both movements (rooting and self-prolongation) can be developed in a natural environment or society with clear structures.

[3] Now this all changes in the third movement, which is the real human movement according to Patocka, which is the movement of *break-through*. Here we break through the current structures and current arrangements in which we live. We break through the usual patterns, the usual world view, and we start to question our relation to the world. We try to have

rational insight in the world as a whole. And also a rational insight in our own existence. This is also the start of philosophy. The wondering: 'Why is the world as it is?' This is the beginning of the third movement of existence. Philosophy is a breakthrough because we do not take for granted anymore the usual world views that are supposed to be self-evident in a mythical society. The first time this movement took place, according to Patocka, and this he also sees as the beginning of history, is in Ancient Greek culture. In Greek civilization we can find the beginning of philosophy, which started with the attitude of wonder. So what is broken through here is the usual patterns of existence. Patocka also calls this the movement of truth. Because from this movement on we really try to understand what life is all about, what the world is all about. We try to find it out through rational insight. This is the change from *mythos* to *logos*. This is the real self-surrender, because in this third movement we also leave the notion of self-interest behind. We understand ourselves in relation to the world. And we have to accept that we surrender to a specific uncertainty, when we realize that the usual views and the usual pattern systems are not self-evident anymore.

This is also the beginning of metaphysics. The first metaphysicians did not only ask these questions, they also had answers. Think here of Plato, Democritus and Aristotle. What is most interesting in this change, according to Patocka, is not the answers, but their questions. From the start of philosophy there have been several answers about the essence of the world and of our lives. So according to Patocka, the main aspect of the start of philosophy is that we do not have definite answers. In terms of Plato: we question the usual points of view, the *doxa*. We cross the *chorismos*, the cleft between opinion and real knowledge, real *episteme*. Real knowledge, according to Plato, we can find in the ideas. But here Patocka says -and here he is clearly influenced by Heidegger- that if we try to survey our existence as a whole, if we try to survey reality as a whole, then we see that we can never reach this absolute knowledge. We do not have a God's eye point of view, we cannot survey our own existence, so we are always stuck with questions we cannot answer. Thus, questioning is the real attitude of philosophy. Now why can we not stay in this unstable uncertain mode of questioning? We have to go back to actual life in order to make decisions in our lives. So we should look for more or less stable principles. If we question the main views of the world, the main views of life, we need to find some answers as well. If we keep asking ourselves these questions there comes a certain moment, where we cannot live without answers anymore and then we become convinced by specific answers. Now this attitude of questioning our own attitude of life, questioning our way of life and questioning our world views; this attitude is a sort of oscillatory movement. Back and forth between the *doxa* we have and the effort to find the real justification for these *doxa*. The justification for the choices we make and the views of life we have. So the surrender of the

third movement of the breakthrough, is a surrender to a specific uncertainty, by which we have to live. Life in problematicity as it is called by Patočka. And it includes a surrender to those principles by which we try to live. This is not only the beginning of philosophy but also the beginning of responsibility. Because from now on we cannot refer to the usual way of life, we cannot refer to the world view that is shared in our culture. We have to rationally give an account of our world view and we also have to give a rational account for the choices we make in life. Now this attitude is what Patočka calls the 'care of the soul', an expression borrowed from Plato. We have to care for our soul. The soul should then not be taken as a thinking substance. No, the soul from an Aristotelian point of view is that which makes us human. Patočka describes the soul as a capability of truth. The soul is that in which we can develop the attitude of a rational, critical, questioning way of life.

Care for the soul

So there are three movements: Anchoring, self-prolongation and breakthrough or truth. The third movement started in ancient Greece and it results in the care of the soul, a specific rational attitude, a rational way of life. Now this care of the soul has had its own history. A history of several stages in the care of the soul. It starts in Greek culture, the step from *mythos* to *logos*. In terms of Plato we try to find insight in the world and in our lives through a dialogue of the soul with itself. According to Patočka it is for Plato in principle possible to find definite answers, to find knowledge of the eternal ideas. In Christianity we find the second stage of the care of the soul. And here Patočka claims that the soul is deepened. The soul is deepened in such a way that it has an abyss. We do not have access to eternal truths. We do not really understand our own soul. In Christian faith it is God who is more interior to us than we are to ourselves. From a Christian point of view we cannot understand our lives and existence as such. We cannot have full rational insight. This because rational reflection is always an addition to faith. The main idea in the Christian care of the soul is that life is a gift. Life is a gift of love by God to us. And now we have to answer to this gift. But the fact that it is a gift is something that is beyond our understanding. We have to accept this fact by faith. Now according to Patočka this is the highest point that has been reached in the care for the soul. The only problem is: it should be thought through more because one of the main ideas of the care of the soul was a rational way of life, and it is exactly faith here that limits this rational insight. The problem of the Christian care of the soul is then that it is not yet fully thought through. So, we might see Patočka's own phenomenology as an effort to change this Christian idea of the care of the soul in a secularized way. In other words, to understand the main aspect of the Christian care for the soul without the notion of faith, without the notion of God, and to still see our lives as a gift we cannot control. As a gift to which

we have to answer and as a gift to which we have to surrender. In one of his later texts he speaks of this in terms of an ontology of love. Life starts as a gift of love and we have to accept it. The best answer in our way of life, is not giving love back to God, but to give love through, to give love through to others.

Technology and sacrifice

Why is Christianity the highest form of the care for the Soul? According to Patočka there is a demise of the care of the soul in modern culture. The care of the soul gets lost. Rationality is no longer a rationality of personal insight into our own lives, but it becomes an instrumental rationality. It is no longer a care *for being* but a care *to have*. And here we can see a parallel with Husserl's view of history in his lectures for 1936's *Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften*, in which Husserl develops the idea that there is a dramatic change in early modern scientific thought, which has caused many problems within western culture. But I cannot go into details on that matter here. Anyhow, the care of the soul gets lost in modern times. Patočka understands this as a fall back from the third movement of life to the second movement of life. He says it is typical for modern culture, for technological civilization, that we relate to the world in terms of self-interest, in terms of calculation, in instrumental rationality. This is very close to Heidegger's view of technology as a *Gestell*, as a framing in which the world appears to us as *vorhanden*. Here the phenomena appear as things that can be dominated, that can be calculated. The result of this is that there are many technological developments that were supposed to give us control, to dominate the world and to reach more freedom in our relation to the world. As is made clear, though, by many other 20th century philosophers, for example by Adorno and Heidegger, this domination had as a result that subjects were more dominated by objects than that they could dominate the objects themselves. According to Patočka, this has led to a technological society, but also to a century that has been dominated by war. Because these technological powers have unchained immense powers that we could not have in control, and also shaped the possibility to kill each other in wars on a scale that was unthinkable in earlier times.

The only way to deal with this technological framing of the world is to find back the care for the soul, to find again the third movement of breakthrough. The movement by which we radically ask questions about the way we lead our lives and by which we do not think of our own lives as something calculable, but by which we understand ourselves as real subjects, and not as things among things. The latter idea is also part of the modern world view, according to Patočka. In the world view in which everything is calculable there is no subject anymore. There is no difference between objects and subjects, subjects become objects as well. You probably know many examples of this. For instance: bureaucratic organization in which you are no

more than a number. But also in the First World War, where many soldiers were sacrificed just as war tools for so-called 'higher' goals. We should question these 'higher' goals, according to Patocka. The only way to understand ourselves as real subjects, and not mere objects, is by finding again the care for the soul. By finding the real meaning of life by surrendering in a relation that escapes all calculation. This idea is developed by Patocka in terms of sacrifice. Sacrificing ourselves means that we do not think of ourselves as calculable, we do not think of other human subjects as calculable. We have to relate to them in a movement of dedication and devotion. Sacrifice does not mean suicide. Sacrifice means questioning the instrumental rationality which shapes our relation to the world in terms of *Gestell*. Through the notion of the care for the soul, we can then find new principles that are really convincing to us. If these are then different from the technologically dominating attitude towards the world, then we have to stick to them regardless of the consequences they have.

Patocka gave a few examples. Robert Oppenheimer and Andrej Sacharov were two dissidents, one in the USA and the other in the Soviet Union, two parts of the political opposition in the 20th century. They were both natural scientists and at a certain moment both of them realized how science had changed the world. They took their consequences by radically criticizing the way their political governments used the new technological possibilities that natural science had brought them. So both Oppenheimer and Sacharov became dissidents and sacrificed their careers. Patocka's main idea regarding technological civilization is that we should find again a questioning from of life, in which we are not focusing on self-interest, which is the usual view, according to Patocka, within the culture of *Gestell*. We should also understand ourselves in relation to the world in such a way that we acknowledge that the world shapes us more than we shape the world ourselves. We have to surrender to the world to devote ourselves in such a way that we let things appear as they should appear. I hope that this has all been a bit clear to you, and if not I'll be more than happy to answer some questions.

Questions

Audience member: In the First World War, soldiers were being sacrificed for the greater good, but isn't that an intricate part of war – I mean war in any era. For instance in Germanic and Nordic tribes it was customary for all men to die on the battlefield and to sacrifice themselves for the greater good.

Evinke: Yes, that is right. To make this a bit more clear I should have told a bit more on what Patocka was saying about this. So the problem of the modern technological culture is that we relate to things in terms of domination,

which has changed in such a way that we cannot control them anymore: the disequilibrium of modern culture. So what happens to these powers is that at a certain moment they are unchained and if they are unchained at a moment of war, you get something like the First World War. What is new in the First World War according to Patocka is that because of these technological powers there was manslaughter on a much larger scale in which soldiers were no more than numbers. Soldiers became sacrificed in technological warfare. What interests Patocka here are several things. He refers to several people that have written about the experiences that soldiers had on the front, the so-called *front experience*. Ernst Jünger and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin have written about this. In the midst of this technological manslaughter they said they [the soldiers] found a specific experience of being part of a larger whole. Together with the soldiers they were fighting against, they were all part of this greater manslaughter and they were recognizing each other in this. Patocka relates this to the notion of *polemos*, which means war, but he also thinks of Heraclitus saying '*polemos pater pantoon*', war is the father of everything. There is unity in conflict. In this conflict of soldiers fighting against each other, undergoing the same thing, they recognized themselves in each other, so there was unity in this conflict. This is the first thing that interests him here. The second thing is that the soldiers were just numbers and for the generals they were losses in the way that you can lose weapons; you can lose cannons, you can lose soldiers. It's all the same from a technological point of view. But still we use the term sacrifice here. Exactly this use of the term sacrifice shows us that people are more than just war tools. So in this notion of sacrifice we can find a way out of the culture of technological domination and calculation, but then we have to understand exactly what sacrifice is about. For Patocka, the sacrifice for high ideals like the fatherland and its values and so on, is an inauthentic sacrifice. Briefly, an inauthentic sacrifice is a sacrifice for specific things. A real sacrifice is a sacrifice that is in relation, not to beings, but, in a Heideggerian sense, to *being* itself. A real sacrifice is something that shows our relation to the way in which things appear to us in an event. This is the way to find back again what really makes us human: the specific relation to the world, the relation in which we understand how things appear to us, in which we take part in the field of appearing. Not as something we create, but as something that also shapes us and creates us. Then we can understand again that things do not appear to us as calculative tools and things we can dominate, but things we have to take care of. So this a larger story to show the several meanings of the term sacrifice.

Now for everything I have said until now, this is all very short. And if you start asking what I mean with this exactly, there will be a very long answer. I just now only gave a few highlights. Are there more questions?

Audience member: I wonder why he uses the term sacrifice, because this is about self-elevation. Why would you call that a sacrifice and not empowerment?

Evinck: he only calls it sacrifice in relation to the notion of *Gestell*, so in the culture of *Gestell* we can only understand our surrender, our devotion to the world and to others in terms of sacrifice. Because sacrifice is exactly that which transcends calculative economic relations. And why is this elevation understood in terms of surrender of sacrifice? Because according to Paročka we can only – this is a Christian idea again – find ourselves by giving up ourselves. So the step from the second movement to the third movement is also the step in which we take distance from the self-interest by which we try to stay alive and we understand our own existence *really* if we do not only live for ourselves, but if we live in service of others.

Why do we have to live in service of others? Because – here we return to the idea of a-subjective phenomenology: we do not create the world, we do not constitute things. We are constituted by the world to which we relate, so we have a real self-understanding if we realize on the one hand that it is important how we relate to the world and interpret the way in which things appear to us and on the other hand we have to understand that it is *us* who constitute the world – but we have to devote ourselves to letting things be and letting them appear in the right way. But then we need to have a more humble relation to the world, which also shapes us, instead of having this modern attitude of a subject that creates worlds.

Audience member: inaudible.

Evinck: Is it the question if there is another example of coming to terms with technological society, other than warfare and soldiers?

Audience member: no, no – the opposite. Ways of serving the world!

Evinck: Well the examples he gives himself, I mentioned Oppenheimer and Sacharov who were willing to give up their careers in order to tell truth. The movement of breakthrough, the third movement of life is also a movement of truth. We have to look for what is really true regardless of our self-interest and whether we like it or not. What is really true is what we find as convincing to us, so what is really true is what we're convinced about.

So Oppenheimer and Sacharov were both living according to their ideals which were completely different from the world in which they lived and from the career they were supposed to have, so both were natural scientists that were actively engaged in the development of atomic bombs, and they

stopped it because they realized that working in this kind of research might destroy the world, instead of serving the world. And then they stood up and criticized their governments because of this and took the consequences of that as well. So this is transcending self-interest, for the sake of the truth. What we have to keep in mind here is that truth is the Heideggerian idea of truth, *aletheia*, *Unverborgenheit*, unconcealedness.

Audience member: But is this sort of transcendence an option for *large numbers* of people?

Evinck: This life, in terms of care for the soul, is a sort of philosophical life. In a way you have to be a philosopher to live this way. Paročka said: it may be hard, but everyone is capable of choosing this attitude.

Audience member: But do you have to change the world? This kind of truth seems to have a high aim.

Evinck: Not necessarily [people laugh]. Paročka saw philosophy more as a way of life, than as a specific kind of work that philosophers do, like reading and writing texts. He was such a philosopher too, but what he was really interested in is not this kind of teaching philosophy at the university, but 'spiritual life', another term for living in truth and care of the soul. Not necessarily the same as the life of an intellectual.

More questions?

Audience member: A question related to Heidegger, I was constantly hearing echoes of Heidegger. So, where does Paročka break away from Heidegger's thought?

Evinck: in several ways, some more clear than others so... He sees the transcendental reduction as a reduction to appearing as such, the field of appearing. And there are a few passages in which he says that appearing is not the same as being so there takes some distance from Heidegger, but these passages are very hard to understand.

Audience member: Is he more directed to Husserl?

Evinck: Yes, he is somewhere in between. Another difference is: the Heidegger from *Sein und Zeit* saw Dasein as a human being that designs new worlds, designs worlds in which things appear.

Audience member: Not as a subject!

Evinke: No, no, no, not as a subject, that's true. But according to Patočka there is too much emphasis on the human, or subjective – if you will – side of this. Not on the human being, but being human and human existence that opens up new worlds in which phenomena can appear. I think Patočka is closer to the later Heidegger: we are more overcome by the world than that we open up worlds. And what is different too is the notion of movement, in which we can see Aristotle again. What really makes us human is a development of our soul in several steps, in a teleological way we become really human if we take the first step. Then we really develop the soul as a capability for truth, and this Aristotelian notion of movement in which we step by step realize ourselves, cannot be found in Heidegger.

Audience member: The notion of soul seems itself a reaction to Heidegger...

Evinke: You're right, there is some criticism of Heidegger in the notion of soul. According to Heidegger there is only one way out of the *Gestell*, the framing of technology. And that is through art. Art can show us new non-calculative relations to the world. In the famous Spiegel interview Heidegger even says: only a god can save us. And Patočka says: finding a better moral attitude in life, care of the soul, can get us out of technological civilization.

Where he agrees with Heidegger is a very pessimistic dark view on modern society as *Gestell*. What's interesting here is that the last text Patočka wrote, a political manifest in 1977, for Charta 77, in which he criticized the Czechoslovakian communist government for taking a very cynical attitude, only trying to maintain its power. The start of Charta 77 was to remind the government on the Helsinki agreements on human rights they had signed a few years earlier. He refers to the notion of human rights and also Immanuel Kant – we can find ideas in his moral philosophy that are almost the same as these notions of human rights – and Patočka refers to Kant as a defender of human rights, which is a much more positive reference to modern culture because these human rights were only developed in a modern culture. So implicit here is a more positive view on specific modern ideas.

Moderator: Last question!

Audience member: Thank you for a lovely presentation, I have a question because you talk about tragedy. I had to think of a distinction made recently between choices in classic and in modern tragedy. Where classic choices are basically framed like 'your money or your life' making it very obvious what you should pick, with more modern choices, in modern tragedy, you are forced to choose between your freedom and your life, in the sense that you can show that you are free only by dying. I was wondering if you could

elaborate on the kind of sacrifice that is made by, for instance, Oppenheimer. Should we rather understand that as a modern or a classic choice?

Evinke: Well Oppenheimer wasn't killed...

Audience member: [disappointed] Oh...

Evinke: He lost his career, so I wonder if you can understand this in terms of modern versus ancient tragedy, but what I could understand from your question is a relation between freedom and death. Freedom is also an important part of the care of the soul, we can really free ourselves from our self-interests by devoting ourselves to the world in which we live and to other human beings in this world. So by taking distance from an instrumental rationality, from in the technological *Gestell*. We can regain our freedom as well, but then we have to sacrifice the self-interests which are central to human life as it is supposed to be lived in a culture of *Gestell*. So we have to give up ourselves to then find ourselves as people living in dedication and devotion, which is living in freedom and making our choices.

A consequence of this might be death. It's not that we look for it but we should be willing to accept it. And he accepted it himself: he stood up for the truth and took the consequences of it, he took the risk of being killed by standing up to the powers that were in his time, and it actually happened. When it comes to ancient tragedy I think fate plays an important role and I think it is part of the third movement and the beginning of philosophy in ancient Greek culture that this notion of fate eventually is lost. That makes me hesitant to compare sacrifice in modern time to sacrifice in ancient tragedy, it is not a matter of fate, it is a matter of finding real rational insight which can never be really found. It has to be looked for in a way of life that always wants to give rational accounts of the choices we make. And here responsibility means something else than the responsibility that is at stake in a mythical world that is divided between divine infinite gods, and finite human beings that should not cross this border in hubris. So real responsibility cannot be found in this Greek world view which is still at stake in the ancient tragedy. Real responsibility can only be found from the third movement on, which starts with Greek philosophy and Greek politics in the polis as well.